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A  
FATHER'S LETTERS  
TO  
HIS DAUGHTER.

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BY ROBERT A. WEST, A. M.



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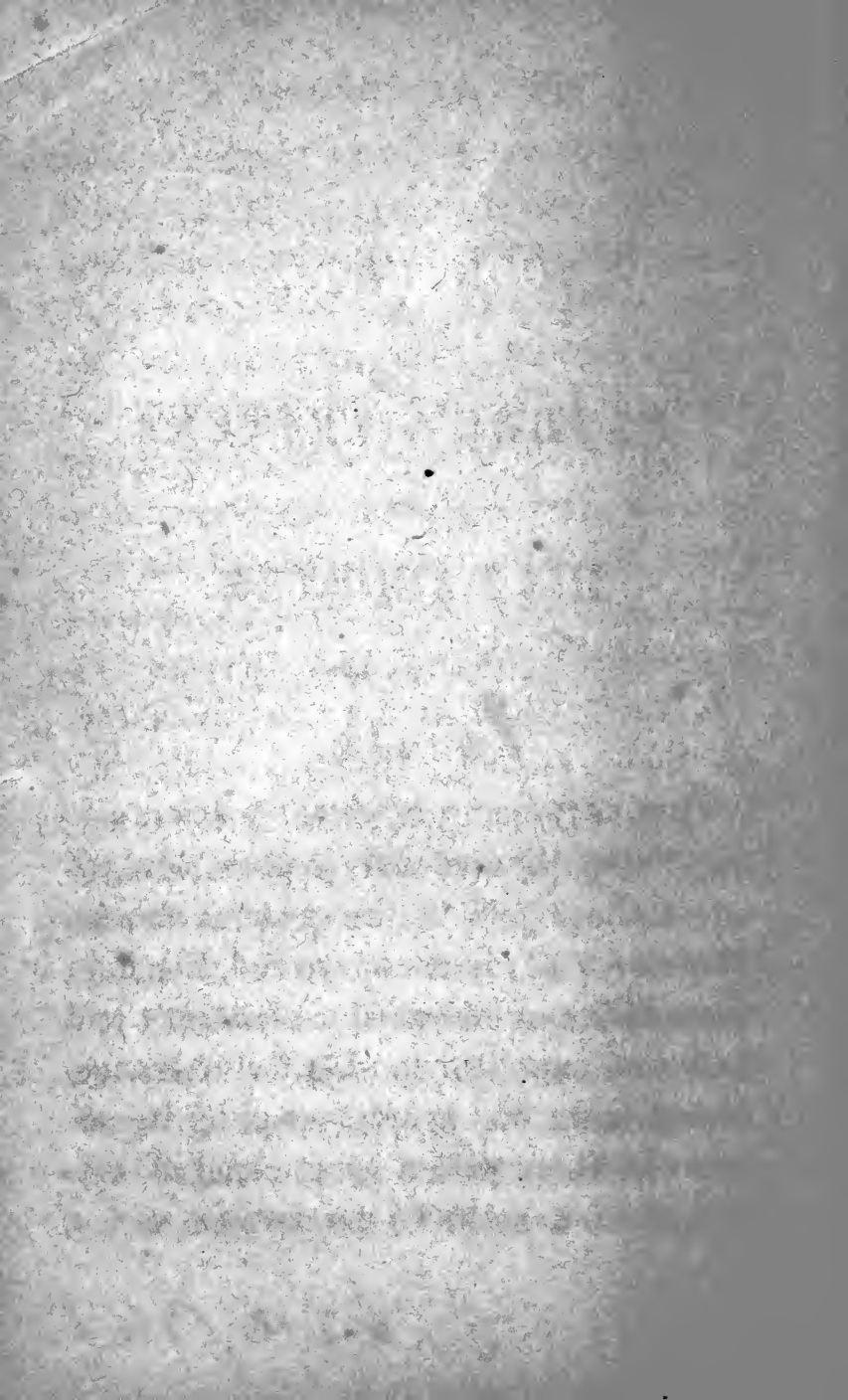
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A  
FATHER'S LETTERS  
TO  
HIS DAUGHTER.

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WOMAN.

OUR very being is WOMAN'S advocate; our nature hymns her praises, and all our feelings join in the grateful chorus. Whenever her name is uttered, touching memories and endeared associations and hallowed emotions, too big for utterance, crowd upon our hearts, peopling its secret chambers with a great cloud of witnesses to a mother's tenderness and a

mother's care ; recalling sweet recollections of a sister's sympathy and a sister's confidence, and thronging alike the past, the present, and the future with blessed conjugal affections—the chastened, but still sweet memory, the present bliss and the anticipated happiness alike centring in hallowed companionship with woman.

She it is who becomes a watchful providence over our helpless infancy, a guardian angel to our heedless childhood, a wise ruler over our fretful boyhood, the guide and counsellor of our ambitious youth-time, and our companion and friend during the time of our sojourning on earth.

All honor to woman, loving and worthy to be beloved. Woman, mysteriously sensitive to love's first glance, yet listening with tremulous timidity to the earnest utterances of its impassioned voice. Woman, yearning for perpetual and holy

companionship with the object of her affections, yet whispering with a strange and mystic dread the vows of a life-long unity. Woman, physically feeble, yet watching with superhuman perseverance through wearisome days and sleepless nights by the fevered couch of those she loves. Woman, instinctively shrinking from the harsher conflicts of life, yet when misfortune lays its ruthless hand upon him to whom she has vowed her heart's allegiance, manifesting heroic courage, unflinching nerve, self-sacrificing toil, and indomitable energy. Woman, the object of our filial, fraternal, and conjugal affections—loving, patient, faithful, enduring. Woman, when loving, braving the world's wrath and the world's scorn for the sake of him she loves, and for his sake, like divinest charity, enduring all things, believing all things, hoping all things. Woman, as mother, as

wife, as daughter, as sister, let her be everywhere revered, and perish the sacrilegious dragon who dares to lay an impious hand upon the sacred ark of her affections.



I,

AT THE INSTITUTE.

MY DEAR —:

I very cheerfully comply with your request to "write you statedly, and on such topics as I deem of importance" to you. You need have no "fear that I shall find the task irksome." On the contrary, I am glad that you have preferred the request. So long as you attach value to my counsels, I shall have great pleasure in writing to you. Even if I loved you less, a sense of parental duty would impel me to advise you in all things to the best of my ability. When I received you from God as his precious gift, I solemnly promised to be a coworker with him in training you for usefulness in time and for happiness in

eternity. I have striven to redeem that pledge, and already I have my reward.

I will not conceal from you that in your general deportment, in your conscientiousness and love of truth, and in your filial affection and dutifulness, your dear mother and myself find a rich compensation for the care and watchfulness we have exercised over you. It is right that you should know this, and should understand that we not only love you as our offspring, but that we also esteem you for your personal qualities. Both parental and filial love are strengthened and refined by resting not alone upon natural affection, but also on the respect which virtue and goodness inspire. You are old enough now to appreciate this, and I write thus frankly because I think your self-respect will be heightened by such knowledge, and that by it you will be stimulated to seek after yet greater ex-

cellence. God bless you, my dear daughter, and enable you at all times to walk in the ways of his commandments blameless.

With regard to the proposed correspondence, I must stipulate that you continue to give me your full confidence. That I have so far possessed it, is to me a source of unqualified pleasure. Your mother and myself have always striven to make each of our children feel that we, above all other earthly friends, are entitled to this full trust, and can best appreciate and most respect it. You will, I feel assured, bear me witness that my ear and heart have been ever open to the story of your joys and sorrows, my tongue ever ready to counsel and my hand to help. I know not that, even in the prattling days of your early childhood, you ever asked me a question that I petulantly refused to answer, or ex-

pressed to me a thought or feeling to which I did not give affectionate attention. In this I have done only what I believe to be the duty of every parent.

Too often, alas, have I seen a young child's growing confidence repulsed, and its tender trust rudely destroyed, by a parent's hasty rebuke of its inquisitiveness or contemptuous laugh at its ignorance. The sensitive-plant shrinks not more instantly from the rude touch, than does the child's confidence from the sharp rebuke or cruel laugh; and filial confidence soon dies under the repetition of the shock. I grieve at the lack of tenderness or the thoughtlessness that thus often destroys the sweetest bond of the family relationship. A little self-denial or self-control on the part of parents would prevent this terrible and irreparable mischief, and secure a family unity that is "better than riches," and "more



to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold." God grant that neither fault of ours, nor aught else, may ever weaken that full trust and confidence in us which it has ever been our joy and pride to create and foster.

And while you give to your parents an unqualified trust, let me caution you to be at present very careful about your *intimacies* elsewhere. Your friendships, especially with those of your own age, should be neither hastily formed nor numerous. You may have many acquaintances, but you need and should have few companions.

Your new situation will expose you to temptation in this respect. Excluded for the first time from home associations, thrown into daily intercourse with so many of your own age and sex, your first impulse will be to admit many into your confidence. Resist this impulse.

Wait until you have had time and opportunity to study the character of your new acquaintances.

Let your *first* friends be the worthy president of the Institute and his excellent wife, the latter especially. To a great extent they, for the present, take the place of your parents. I did not confide you to their superintendence and care without first satisfying myself of their intellectual, moral, and religious qualifications, as well as of their professional abilities. I was even more solicitous about the former than the latter. It will be safe and wise to follow the counsels of Mrs. —, and she will not repel you if you seek her friendship. For the present, cultivate the society of persons of riper years and greater experience than yourself. Indeed I had almost said that that of Mrs. — is the only friendship you now need. Certainly

it is the only one that it will be wise at present to seek or solicit.

Especially avoid any closer acquaintance than courtesy demands with those young ladies around you whose thoughts dwell mainly upon vanities and frivolities, whose conversation is only of dress and fashion, or idle gossip and speculations about the other sex. At your age, my dear ——, it is better that you should have no companionship that will not foster the higher qualities of your nature. Nor will you have time for many intimacies.

You have been placed where you are with a well-defined object; namely, your improvement and maturity in a thorough education. This involves expense, cheerfully incurred, but not inconsiderable nevertheless. You cannot, nor do I wish that you should, repay us in kind; but you can recompense us by improving

your advantages to the utmost. To do this, you must fortify your mind against the waste of time that is too often occasioned by mere girlish friendships. And you require more than time for progress in learning. You need the perfect control and mastery of your thoughts—the power of applying your mental faculties at will wholly to your studies.

Moreover, the habit of caution and reflection with reference to your personal associations thus early formed, will be of incalculable benefit to you hereafter. Perhaps nothing is to a woman so fruitful a source of mortification and misery as her liability to be guided by her feelings rather than by her judgment in forming her friendships. I wish you, my dear daughter, to be guided in this, as in all other matters, by principle and not by impulse, and to *study* character—mental, moral, and religious—before you

confer your friendship and your confidence.

“Since friends do *not* grow thick on every bough,  
First on thy friend deliberate with thyself.  
Pause, ponder, sift ; not eager in the choice,  
Nor jealous of the chosen ; fixing, fix :  
*Judge before friendship ; then confide till death.*”

With respect to your deportment towards other members of the Institute, I doubt not you will be well counselled by Mrs. —— and the teachers. Any advice of mine must be very general, save on one point, on which I must speak explicitly. If in the order of domestic arrangements you are thrown into association as room-mate with any young lady whose personal habits or moral qualities are not good, have no hesitation about speaking to Mrs. —— on the subject, or to whoever has charge of the matter, and requesting a change of companion. Of course I would not have you do this for

light or insufficient cause ; but I must lay my earnest request upon you to take that step when your judgment tells you that the cause is sufficient. Old as the maxim is, it is still true that "evil communications corrupt good manners;" and great as my confidence in you is, I cannot consent that you should be exposed for months to the influence of such close and constant association with any one of unladylike habits or dull moral perceptions. As you will perhaps wonder that I lay so much stress upon this point, I will say that it is at your mother's special request ; and I may here add that, though in this correspondence the handwriting may be mine, hers will often be the inspiration. She can well appreciate the influence of a room-mate upon one of your years.

You can have no rule for the guidance of your general deportment so good as

the divine rule, "Whatsoever you would that others should do unto you, that do unto them." This is the sum and essence of all true politeness, as well as the surest path to all true elevation of character. Act upon it uniformly; and if you sometimes err through imperfection of knowledge in the mere form and technicalities of etiquette, you will yet enjoy the consciousness of having sought to act up to the highest standard of duty and goodness.

Be just to others as well as to yourself. To the principals, to your teachers, to those who are your superiors in age or station, pay unhesitatingly the respect which is their due. To your equals be affable and courteous. To your inferiors be generously civil. You will have little to do, I suppose, with the domestics of the household; but should you come in contact with them, treat them invariably

with unassuming kindness. I particularly wish you to cultivate this disposition. I cannot conceive of a Christian lady, nay, of a truly refined and tender woman—to say nothing of the obligations imposed by Christianity—treating with harshness those of her own sex who, in the providence of God, are appointed to a life of labor and privation, and upon whom she depends so largely for her domestic comfort. You have had a better example before you. Follow it at all times. To the servants of the household, I repeat, conduct yourself with graciousness; not with familiarity, for that too would be wrong; but with the kindness and consideration that are due to all, and which to the toiling domestics are the more grateful because too commonly denied them. Cultivate, in short, a true politeness towards all, and you will have your reward in your own heart and in



the respect and commendation of all whose esteem is worth having.

You will misinterpret what I have said about intimacies and friendships, if it leads you to stand aloof from the pleasant freedom of social intercourse. Now is the time for you to cultivate correct social tastes and habits. When you leave —— Institute, you will commence the business of life. You will have to take your place in the moving and living world. Prepare to fill it worthily. Accustom yourself to such of the usages of society as are honorable and right.

There is one point in which I wish to see some improvement in you. Earnestly and perseveringly aim at greater self-control. I know that you are yet young, and it may seem almost ungracious to press upon you just now such grave counsel. But if you would reap the full benefit of improvement in this

respect, it is *now* that you must learn the difficult science of self-government. If the lesser joys and sorrows of life are permitted unduly to elate or depress you, the greater ones will hereafter assuredly have the same effect, even though your years may be riper. I want you, therefore, now to acquire the *habit* of self-control, so that when you come to fill your allotted place in society, you may be qualified for it. What will now be easy to acquire, because all your surroundings are favorable, will be difficult two or three years hence in the presence of increased embarrassments and multiplied duties. Be just to yourself in this matter. Labor to acquire greater self-possession, so that your bearing shall, while modest, be composed and self-reliant in every society and under all circumstances; as far from awkwardness as from that unmaidenly boldness which too

often at the present day passes for fashionable ease. Calmness and equanimity of carriage will richly repay cultivation. They are both useful and ornamental.

Other counsels I will defer until my next letter. But there is one that I must neither omit nor postpone. My beloved daughter, "*Fear God, and work righteousness.*" Learning is good, but godliness is better. Very pleasant is the knowledge of your love for me, but my joy therein can never be perfect till I know that you love God with your whole heart. You have many advantages, but they will be accusing angels at the judgment-day unless you use them for God's service and glory. I may give you many counsels, but higher and more imperative than they all is God's command, "Give me thy heart." Listen to the voice of your Maker and Redeemer, and obey. Whatever else you learn, neglect not to

familiarize yourself with God's word. Other studies may make you wise for time ; this shall instruct you for eternity. Whatever friendships you form, wed your heart to the Saviour. " Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace."

Your affectionate father.



## II.

## THE EARNEST INQUIRER.

MY DEAR —:

WORDS cannot express the delight your letter gave to your mother and myself. Grateful tears have testified to our joy. God, we trust, is answering our prayers on your behalf. I have never doubted that, in his own good time, he would yield to our importunity. Sometimes, in my anxiety for my dear child's salvation, I have cried out, "How long, O Lord, how long?" but I have never ceased my intercessions, or withdrawn my trust from his promises. When I read the language of your poignant grief—"My heart is breaking because of my sinfulness"—my soul blessed God, for I trust it is to be a "godly sor-

row," "not to be repented of." Be assured that not many minutes passed, after reading your letter, before your glad parents were bowing before God, jointly pleading that he would lift upon you the light of his reconciled countenance, and give you peace and joy in believing.

Greatly do I rejoice also that you have written so frankly and fully of your religious experience. I know something of human nature, and of the temptations of Satan, and how many young people have been ensnared into struggling alone through the dark hours of conviction of sin, when the sympathy and counsel of those who have passed through the same experience might have led them speedily to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Open your heart with like confidence to your heavenly Father, and he will not withhold from you his mercy and forgiveness. I trust "the Lord whom

you seek will suddenly come to his temple;" and with his presence will come light and peace and joy unspeakable.

You say that it is "over the sinfulness of your *heart* that you mourn," and that "when God first gave you a sight of that secret chamber of imagery, you were struck dumb with amazement and contrition;" but that "afterwards you were strongly tempted to qualify the bitterness of your shame and confusion by comparing your general conduct with that of others of your own sex whose lives were outwardly more faulty." This is no uncommon temptation, and has been often successfully employed by the enemy of souls to lead the true penitent away from the cross. You, however, have been accustomed from your youth to an evangelical and practical ministry, and by being thus forewarned, were forearmed against this device of Satan. Con-

scious that your heart habitually rebelled against the supremacy of Christ, you knew that in God's sight you were guilty and under condemnation. Now, in the bitterness of your soul, you exclaim, "O wretched one that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" You are humbled in the dust by a sense of your sinfulness and guilt. I would not have you abate one iota of this humiliation. You *are* depraved and sinful, and in the sight of God guilty and unclean. The restraints of domestic training and the force of education have moulded your outward character, and made it engaging and lovely. But they have not changed your heart, which by nature is "desperately wicked" and at "enmity with God." However faultless your outward life may have been, if unrenewed by the power of the Holy Spirit, you are still unreconciled to God, have



no sense of his pardoning love and favor, and no hold upon eternal life. You "*must* be born again," or be shut out of the kingdom of heaven. Fear not then to go down into the valley of humiliation just so far as the Spirit of God leads you. "Out of the depths" you can still cry unto God; and the deeper your distress, the more ready will he be to hear your cry and deliver you. We are never so near a saving faith in Christ as when our sense of sinfulness destroys all trust in ourselves.

Let me caution you, my dear —, against a mistake in the opposite direction, of the danger of which I think I see some indications in your letter, for you say, "Sometimes I am so nearly shut up to faith in Christ, that I feel almost ready to cast myself upon his atoning mercy. But then I am checked by the fear that I have not repented long enough and

deeply enough." This is only another temptation of Satan, but it is one so well adapted to your disposition, that I fear it may delay the glad hour when you shall believe upon the Son of God.

Let me counsel you to put this temptation away from you. That you may be able to do this, bring the feeling into the light of Bible truth. You will see that it is cruel to yourself and dishonoring towards God. Stripped of all sophistry, the temptation proposes that you should do something to make your repentance meritorious, and to propitiate your offended Maker and Judge. I am sure you will shrink from such a thought. Yet this is the real character of the suggestion. Satan would fain possess your mind with the idea that you are to weep more, to lament and grieve longer, in order to convince the omniscient God that you are sincere, and to win him

over to compassion. Your self-abasement is to be perverted into a lengthened preparation for the welcoming of the "Spirit of adoption." I know of no scriptural standard by which the intensity and duration of your repentance are to be measured, other than that your sorrow is "a godly sorrow," leading you to abhor yourself, and driving you to Christ for pardon and regeneration.

If your penitence is of this sincere and genuine kind, there need be no impediment to your trust in Christ. But if there be some reservation in your loathing of sin, some lurking purpose of compromise in your abandonment of it, some idol in your heart that you are unwilling utterly to cast down and destroy, or some trust in yourself that is incompatible with the Scripture plan of salvation, "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"—for

these reasons, and for these alone, will God withhold from you the joys of his salvation.

Examine yourself therefore, my dear child, and see whether there be any of these hinderances to your acceptance with God. Do not be afraid to probe your heart to its utmost depths. Fear nothing so much as delay in being admitted into the family of God and the household of heaven, for this is your life. Do you "truly and unfeignedly repent" of all your sins? Have you abandoned all self-reliance? Have you renounced all hope of salvation, save through the mercy of God and the atonement of Christ? Then indeed you are "not far from the kingdom of heaven." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." You need do nothing, you *can do* nothing more in order to salvation. You are on the very threshold of

pardon. Knock with the boldness of humble faith, and the door shall be opened to you. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, . . . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

The condition is easy. Do not perplex yourself about definitions of faith. The faith that will save you is a simple trust in Christ as your atonement, as having borne in your stead the penalty due to your transgressions. This faith will assuredly be given you when your heart is emptied of all other trust than Christ the Crucified. Be importunate with God for this blessing. Pray much in secret for it. Secret prayer honors God. The very act of retiring to be "alone with God" is a declaration of confidence in him. It is equivalent to saying, "To

thee, my best Friend, I come in my distress, to breathe my desires into thy willing ear. Well I know that in thee only is my strength and my salvation, and that thou art a friend who cleaveth closer than a brother." If you are often closeted with God, you cannot help putting your trust in him; and you will carry about with you such memories of those seasons of divine communion as shall preserve you daily from frivolity and sin. It is in secret prayer also that your heart can find the most unrestrained utterings of all its yearnings, and where God will come down and "commune with you from off the mercy-seat, and from between the cherubim."

Be diligent also in attendance upon all the public means of grace. I lay little stress upon those adventitious aids which have come into use, such as the standing up in the congregation in solicitation of

the prayers of God's people, or bowing around those who conduct the public exercises. I do not, I dare not condemn such proceedings, for undeniably they have been owned of God. "His ways are not our ways," and he is *sovereign*. "When he speaks, let all the earth keep silence," and reverently listen. What he ordains or approves standeth sure, and woe be to him who opposes it. But I cannot conceal a misgiving that some ministers and congregations are in danger of attaching too much importance to these measures, and of resorting to them habitually—I had almost said mechanically. Some of the fathers regarded them as useful in special cases, and especially in breaking the snare which the fear of man bringeth. Some of the sons, I fear, have almost made them the rule; and it is well if many persons have not learned to regard them as part of the

condition of salvation. I think it likely, my dear ——, that *you* will more profitably wait upon God in the quiet and reserve of your own place in the congregation, than by the public demonstrations referred to.

At any rate it is my duty to remind you that God respects neither place nor attitude, but the state of your heart and the sincerity of your worship. “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit.” In all the means of grace, as in secret prayer, draw near to God “with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith.” Expect to meet the Saviour in the sanctuary, and look ever for a present blessing. For this you have Jehovah’s warrant. He is faithful who has promised, and he will perform. Take him at his word, and you shall be blessed indeed.

I rejoice that your heart yearns for the



privilege of uniting with the people of God in communion at the Lord's supper. The "table of the Lord" is the fittest place for the true and humble penitent. I know of no greater help to faith than this holy ordinance. What a volume of encouragement is there in the touching language, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was broken for *you*;" "The blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for *you*." Oh precious truth! Oh faith-inspiring language! And near these visible signs and mementos of his sufferings, of his "cross and passion on the tree," of his great atoning sacrifice, stands the invisible Saviour himself, whispering to the penitent's troubled heart, "I suffered this for you." Be assured that the Redeemer will ever honor those who honor him in this ordinance, and "waiteth to be gracious" to those who "do this in remembrance" of him. There is no pro-

hibition of that sacred ordinance to penitent and believing souls.

And now, my dear ——, I must commend you to God and the word of his grace. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things, . . . and the God of peace shall be with you." Write me as often as inclination prompts and opportunity permits. Speak freely of your religious feelings. I will reciprocate your confidence. So shall we be helpers one of another in our journey heavenward. Let there be no concealment, no shyness, no reserve between us on topics pertaining to our common and dearest hopes.

Some one has said that "a want of familiarity between parents and children

on religious matters, and a constrained intercourse between them, are a key to the failure of many parents in their efforts to train up their children in the way they should go, as well as a fruitful source of infidelity in the child. A want of freedom begets a want of confidence mutually; the natural effect of which is a loss of religious influence on the one part, and of filial trust on the other." I fear there is much truth in this, though I am at a loss to understand *why* it should be thus when genuine religion and fervent love to God fill the parent's heart. Let us not fall into this error. May God speedily lift upon you the smile of his favor and make you glad in the day of his power, is the prayer of

Your affectionate father.

## III.

## THE YOUNG CONVERT.

MY DEAR — :

HEARTILY do I sympathize with you in your newly found joy. You trust you are now a child of God and an heir of the promises, having “received the Spirit of adoption, whereby you cry, Abba, Father.” I do not marvel that you say, “I never knew what true happiness was till now.” And yet you have but begun to know the love of God which passeth knowledge. He who has done this great thing for you shall still show you “wondrous things out of his law.” You shall indeed find that “Wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” Hold fast that whereunto you have attained, and by the same faith

that brought you salvation, you shall “go on to perfection,” walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless, and being kept unspotted from the world.

I can never tell you, my dear ——, how earnestly your parents have prayed that this saving change might be wrought in you before you were called to leave —— Institute and enter upon the more active scenes and duties of life. We had no doubt that in every situation you would “walk circumspectly,” according to the most rigid moralist’s interpretation of the term; but we were deeply solicitous that you should do this not in your own strength, or from prudential motives alone. We yearned to see you acting in all things from religious principle; and we knew that this could only have its full power and influence when your heart had been renewed in righteousness, and you had learned to value

your heavenly Father's approval beyond all other things. Henceforth the fear of the Lord will be your guiding-star, and filial love to God will prompt you ever to a holy life and conversation.

Your welcome letter abounds in those expressions of joyous feeling which all experience who have passed from death unto life, and in pious resolutions which evince the intense gratitude of a soul that is born anew of the Spirit. Far be it from me to damp your joy or abate your zeal. But I should wrongfully withhold from you the benefit of experience, were I not to warn you that the measure of your joy will fluctuate, and that it is always easier to resolve than to do. The flesh is often reluctant when the spirit is willing. Do not misunderstand me. There is no *need* of any abatement of your present happiness. Nor *will* it decrease if in no degree you cast away your

confidence. But your history will be unlike that of many young converts, if Satan does not find means of beguiling you in some measure of that precious trust; and if you cease to "live by faith upon the Son of God," doubt and sadness will come upon you. At the first shadow of a cloud over your consciousness of the divine favor, examine yourself closely. If you are self-convicted of sin either of omission or commission, "repent and do your first works." In penitence and faith ask forgiveness of God. He will not be less gracious to the repentant child than he was to the penitent rebel. He will pardon your transgressions and heal your backslidings, and again love you freely; for he knoweth our weakness, and the subtlety and strength of the tempter. If after an honest examination of your heart you are not conscious of any departure from God, you may be assured that you

are "tempted of Satan." God does not causelessly afflict his children. From that assault of the evil one it is your privilege to fly to the haven of your Saviour's breast. He will hide you in the pavilion of his mercy, and give you "joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Let me now impress upon your mind that the uniform and consistent *practice of piety* requires no small degree of watchfulness and firmness, and large supplies of the strength that cometh from above. Prayer and faith will secure you that divine strength, and you shall learn what those words mean, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Only keep open your access to the throne of grace, and your works shall glorify God. Be not discouraged if you sometimes fail to reach the measure of the standard you have set up for your-



self. When you fall short, draw so much nearer to the inexhaustible source of all grace and wisdom. He will hear your prayer, and will help you to fulfil all righteousness. Walk with Christ in God, and all will be well; and constantly bear in mind that no works are perfect or acceptable to God but such as are begun, continued, and ended in him. Aim high. Be in earnest to *do* the Master's will. Prayerfully

“Labor on at his command,  
And offer all your works to him,”

and the God of peace will dwell with you.

Daily, systematically *study* your Bible. It is no mere rhetoric which declares that the Scriptures are “able to make you wise unto salvation.” For this end were they given unto us. This is the function of the word of life. In my judgment it is more beneficial to meditate thereon

and comprehend its sentiment, than to commit its language to memory. This you may do, however, and not leave the other undone. Ponder each verse or paragraph, taken in connection with its context, until you have thoroughly digested its teachings and engraven them upon your mind.

Nor would I have you limit your reading even mainly to the doctrinal and devotional portions. Remember that "*all* Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and is designed for "*instruction* in righteousness," so that the Christian's life may be moulded into purity and harmony. The Bible, including both the Old and the New Testaments, is a treasury of sound principles and useful counsels; and whoso walketh by its precepts shall be wise and useful here, and hereafter lay hold on eternal life.

Alas, how little do the present gener-

ation of Christians appreciate the *practical* part of the Scriptures of truth. Study and master this part of God's word for yourself, its maxims, its proverbs, its narratives, its incidental as well as its more direct elucidations of principles, and apply them in your life. So shall you be thoroughly furnished to every good word and work. "More to be desired" are these "than gold, yea, than much fine gold."

Your affectionate father.



## IV.

## LEAVING THE INSTITUTE.

MY DEAR —:

You have now but a few weeks to remain at the — Institute. There are doubtless too many young ladies who, in like circumstances, would impatiently count the days and hours that must intervene before they can be freed from educational restraints. They would relax their studies, and be impatient of the still imposed discipline. I hope and believe better things of you. I trust that you will continue diligently to improve the advantages you must so soon cease to enjoy. You can no more *leave* your present situation with satisfaction to yourself without due preparation, than you could have satisfactorily entered

upon it without preparatory thought and study.

You are about to close an era in your life. Take time to survey deliberately the three years you have spent under Mr. ——'s roof. Ask yourself whether you have accomplished all that you proposed, and that your parents hoped for, when you entered the Institute. *We* have no complaint to make, but possibly you may be conscious of partial failure. If so, be determined to retrieve it while the opportunity remains. Look over your various branches of study, and measure your attainments in them. Buy up every moment for improvement in those in which you are least proficient. All the helps needed are yet within your reach. Avail yourself of them to bring up arrears, and to confirm yourself in the knowledge you have acquired. Be too wise to spend your time in dreams of the

future. You have to do with the great practical present, which will glide away from you all too soon. And when you have done your best to perfect yourself in knowledge and real accomplishments, you will still find occasion for regret that you have not done better.

A young acquaintance of yours said in my hearing the other day, that she "hoped soon to *escape* from school." I trust that you take a more sensible view of your approaching departure from — Institute. You are bidding adieu to many personal comforts, to incalculable benefits, to freedom from care, to a cordon of favorable circumstances by which, with affectionate care on our part, you have been surrounded, that you might the more easily store your mind with knowledge, acquire correct ideas and habits, and so be prepared to fight the battle of life with honor and success. So

far from desiring to “escape” from such a fortunate position, you will, I am sure, consider the time too short for the work you have yet to do, and will scrupulously employ the hours that remain in more fully fitting yourself for the new phase of life on which you are about to enter.

Strive to confirm yourself in those habits which, under the change of social condition, will be most advantageous to you. A friendly note from Mrs. ——— to your dear mother, among other commendations of you which have gratified us much, speaks in warm praise of your neatness and exactitude in all things personal and domestic. We rejoice at this. Such habits closely concern your happiness in whatever situation you may be placed. They are really invaluable to your sex. They save time and money and temper. They rank very high among the things that promote domestic happi-

ness and tranquillity. The unity and concord of many a household have died out for lack of them. "Order is heaven's first law;" and many of the miseries and discomforts of earth might be avoided by obedience to the apostolic injunction, "Let *all* things be done decently and in order." No woman's education is complete until she has learned to make this precept the rule of her life.

What I said in a former letter about intimacies, I would at this juncture recall to your mind. You have my unqualified approval, however, let me here say, of the intimacy you have formed with Miss ——. Her seniority in years, though not great, is one of the points which commend your choice of her as a *friend*. Her good sense and sound judgment, her cheerful yet dignified deportment, her clear intellect and vigorous understanding, her sympathetic nature united with



some experience and knowledge of the world, her unpretending self-reliance, and her enlightened and genuine piety, are qualities that make her friendship of priceless value to you at this time. It is very gratifying to me, and speaks well for you, that you have now her love and confidence.

Such friends are more precious than rubies. I would have you gratefully accept and cordially reciprocate her offer of correspondence. But I would advise you to give no other similar promises. You will make an unworthy return for her kindness, and violate a strong moral obligation, if you are not punctual in your correspondence with her. As engagements grow upon you, it will be difficult even to do this, and impossible to do more. No doubt you will be pressed to enter into correspondence with your class-mates and other young ladies of your own age. I strongly suspect that

in such exchange of letters you would find much labor and but little profit, and I advise you to refrain from giving such pledges. Of course I do not mean that the pleasant associations of the last three years are to be ungratefully forgotten, or that you should steel your heart against the claims and the memories of worthy acquaintanceships. It should be a grateful task to you to exchange friendly sentiments occasionally with those with whom you have lived so agreeably. What I mean is, that you had better not bind yourself by any *promises*, because you may lack the power to fulfil them, and the influence of the smallest promise violated is both painful and hurtful.

Let me add, that the change of circumstances that awaits you will necessitate a change in your modes of thought and in your general demeanor. You will no longer be subject to masters and to the

formalities which the discipline of an educational institution renders expedient, if not necessary. You will assume your position among your peers, and mingling with society, will have to speak and act upon your own responsibility.

With girlish frivolities you will have to abandon also, at least to a great extent, the habit of relying upon others for counsel and guidance. For the written and unwritten rules of a well-ordered institute you will have to substitute your own conscience and your own perception of what is expedient or becoming. Even the counsels of your parents will not always be accessible. But your heavenly Father will ever be nigh unto you. Look to him for counsel and aid. "Lean not to thine own understanding; but in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Your affectionate father.

## V.

## ENTERING UPON LIFE.

MY DEAR — :

You have early discovered that

“Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,”

for you frankly tell me that, in your efforts to make your future, you “have met with more discouragements than you expected.” Yet during the few weeks you spent at home we conversed freely on this subject, and I certainly did not spare words of affectionate warning. I suppose, however, that no young person with favorable prospects ever stood at the porch of life, as you did three short months ago, without falling under the spell of that great enchantress the *future*. It is ever thus with my own sex; and I presume that this too buoyant hopeful-

ness is an attribute of youth, and not a peculiarity of sex. I feared, while I counselled you, that you would scarcely give full credence to all I said experience would teach you when you came to stand alone in a strange place and among strangers, battling for honorable position in the world. Yet I could not blame you, for I remembered my own incredulity when similarly counselled. Seen in the "distance," the future seemed so fair and promising, that you could not believe there was in the world so much of calculating selfishness, with so little of pure morality, of genial humanity, and brotherly love.

I knew, however, that what your parents had learned, experience would teach *you*, and that it was a matter in which you must take your lessons from that schoolmaster. You had to learn how literally true are Scripture teachings,

and to find out that the world lieth in the arms of the wicked one, breathing his temper and animated by his spirit. But in all this be not discouraged. Yours is the "faith that overcometh the world." Read often and studiously the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. Emulate in your degree the example of those ancient worthies who, having received not the promises, which are yours under the new covenant, yet endured trials and overcame discouragements in comparison with which yours merit no mention.

Yet, my dear —, I sincerely sympathize with you. To *you* the trials you name are no light afflictions, and your inexperience adds to the poignancy of the grief they cause you. But let me remind you that you have no right to expect from strangers, who have no personal interest in you, the delicate regard

for your feelings, the promptness to gratify your reasonable wishes, the disinterestedness of counsel, the considerate sympathy you enjoyed under the parental roof. The interests of others will clash with yours, and you may become the subject of jealousies and dislikes, the reasons for which you can neither understand nor suspect. Your motives may be maligned, your actions misinterpreted, and even your good be evil spoken of.

These trials are common to the young when they leave home and embark upon the "wide, wide world." They must be valiantly met, firmly grappled with, and brought to the sober measurement of experience. Examined in the light of God's word, they will be found to be parts of a divinely instituted moral discipline by which your character is to be formed for time and for eternity. It is for you, my dear daughter, to take heed

that none of these things move you from the steadfastness of your faith, or separate you from the love of Christ. Then shall they "work together for your good," and lead you to put on "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

You have a character to establish, as well as a worldly position to gain. The latter, with your talents and advantages, can be acquired by ordinary industry. But that excellence of character, of which it would grieve me that you should fall short, is reached only by a more difficult path. Character is not formed by an occasional deed, good or bad, but by a succession of acts. *Habits are character.* Hence the necessity of constant watchfulness. The uncongeniality, the selfishness, and even enmity of others, may be turned to good account for the maturing and perfecting of your character, and



reason teaches and God commands that they be put to such use. Especially let none of these annoyances ruffle your spirit or sour your temper. Carry yourself courteously to all, as becomes your sex and your religion. Keep a pure conscience. Abide faithfully and unflinchingly by principle, and under all circumstances maintain inviolate your self-respect. Your opinions you may keep in abeyance. It may sometimes be expedient to waive your undoubted individual rights. But you can never sacrifice principle or infringe upon your self-respect without loss and dishonor. Give way to no supersensitiveness about the bearing of those around you. *Whatever it costs, do right.* Your happiness is in your own keeping, and none can rob you of it if you live in the light of God's countenance and walk according to his precepts. "Great peace have they who

love thy law, and nothing shall offend them."

I recognize, my dear ——, the conscientiousness of your course with respect to going into mixed company. I should grieve to see you counted among those frivolous young women who are happy only amid the whirl and rush of society, and who, when thrown upon themselves for society, find only unwelcome solitude. You say that you need time for reading, for mental improvement generally, for calm reflection, self-examination, devotion, and communion with God. I concede this, and I would have your mind so well stored and disciplined that *yourself shall always be a companion for yourself*. I agree with you also in your averment that in what is called society there is much conversation that tends not to godliness or even to edification, but is emphatically unprofitable and in-

jurious. But when all this is admitted, it will not justify you in standing aloof from all the social circles that are accessible to you. You are to be of use to society, as well as to derive pleasure from it; and no sensible, well-informed, virtuous young woman is without large influence for good in whatever circle she may move. It is in her power, probably more than of the other sex, to work social reformation, to rebuke folly, and inculcate wisdom. And for the use of this talent you are responsible to your Creator.

I know that some ladies complain that gentlemen rarely address them as intellectual beings, but seem to consider them incompetent to converse on grave and important topics. I cannot dispute the fact, but I am free to say that I do not think the blame rests exclusively with my own sex. We are by nature solici-

itous to ingratiate ourselves with you. Except in the case of a certain shallow-brained class, we are not incapable of discerning when you are pleased; and if light and frivolous conversation has become the rule with men when conversing with women, I fear it is because we have found that to be the shortest and most direct road to your favor and companionship. The inference is not flattering to your sex, but I may speak frankly to *you*, because it is within the province of parental duty, and it can be no offence to you for me to speak the truth. It certainly is within the power of your sex to correct this evil, if you be so minded. Teach us that we can only be enshrined in your good graces when we pay homage to your intelligence, rather than to your vanity; when we challenge you to earnest and improving conversation, rather than when we seek to amuse you

by frivolity and badinage—and we shall be willing pupils. Of course I would not have any lady of your age make a *display* of educational acquirements or mental power. But I would have you wisely employ your talents, and the influence which is so potent an attribute of your sex, in endeavoring to improve the society into which you are thrown, for this I hold to be your duty. God has made no individual or class independent of others, or self-sufficient for their own social happiness. It is by interchange that mutual wants are supplied, and such interchange can only be effected by social intercourse.

Besides, there are certain desirable habits or manners that can only be acquired by mingling in society, such as grace and freedom of deportment, ease and readiness in conversation, knowledge of current topics and events, and

the many other accomplishments which heighten a woman's attractiveness and influence.

Nor would I counsel you now to neglect altogether the society of those of your own age. Youth is entitled to the indulgence, within proper limits, of its vivacity, its tastes and sympathies ; and so long as you keep the fear of the Lord before your eyes, you can safely take occasional part in the play of refined wit and genuine mirth. It cannot be expected, neither is it to be desired, that young people should always utter grave sentences, sage admonitions, and solemn reflections. The recreation of pleasant converse is needful to soothe the infelicities of life. Only we must be careful at the same time to maintain the temper becoming immortal beings. Because we are weak, there is no reason why we should be silly. The brow of care may be smoothed with-

out our overspreading it with the laughter of folly.

But while I make these admissions, I would repeat a suggestion I made to you some time ago. You will *profit* most by the society of persons older than yourself. Their knowledge and experience will benefit you largely. "He who walketh with wise men shall be wise," says Solomon, and the maxim is as applicable to the one sex as to the other. The conversation of older people may afford you less immediate pleasure, but it will afterwards bring you a richer compensation.

Your affectionate father.

## VI.

## WOMANLY DEPORTMENT.

MY DEAR — :

YOUR parents have not been unmindful that this is the anniversary of your birthday. We have been with you in spirit, blessing in our hearts our absent daughter, and wishing you, with all the fervor of parental affection, every spiritual and temporal blessing. I doubt not that with the opening day you lifted your heart to God in unison with the poet's joyful strain :

“God of my life, to thee  
My cheerful voice I raise ;  
Thy goodness made me be,  
And still prolongs my days :  
I see my natal hour return,  
*And bless the day that I was born.*”

On *this* anniversary of your natal day,



and amid the serious meditations in which I feel assured you have indulged, it has doubtless occurred to you, that you should now begin earnestly to cultivate the graver thoughts and occupations of womanhood. In truth, your letters have lately indicated that this further development of your character is in progress. This is well, and I rejoice over it. I should have been pained had I seen no greater earnestness of purpose, no fuller appreciation of your responsibilities, and no deeper solicitude about worthily filling your part in the great drama of active life, as you grew in knowledge and in years.

You stand now, my dear —, on the threshold of womanhood, at the door of a temple which Christianity has sanctified to all virtuous and ennobling influences. I would have you enter, not with abruptness and temerity, but with deliberation,

calmness, and dignity, carrying with you at every step the truly feminine virtues of modesty, tenderness, and grace. Neither vigor of intellect, nor the accomplishments of education will atone for the lack of these. They are as essential to the perfection of womanhood as strength is to the maturity of manhood. Modesty, says a modern writer, is a woman's natural safeguard; a sensitiveness, an intuition which makes her withdraw herself from every thing that has danger in it, warning her to shun every thing that is hurtful, and ever tending to keep her within her own true womanly sphere. Tenderness makes a woman promptly responsive to all generous and gentle impulses, giving "quickness to her sympathies, softness to her judgments, and devotedness to her love, inclining her ever to charity rather than to rigor, to mercy rather than to severity." Grace is an

instinctive aptitude, a quick sense of what is becoming, which inspires woman's every word and movement with a beautiful propriety. These are God's gifts to your sex; they are native, not acquired; but they will bear culture, and will marvellously repay it, yielding a bounteous harvest of sincere admiration and esteem. They are the vital essence of womanhood, giving it all its bloom and perfume, and clothing it in irresistible influence.

Bearing these thoughts in mind, you will not find it difficult to walk circumspectly in the path that is opening before you. Let me, however, warn you that there is a spurious modesty abroad at the present day, an affectation of a superdelicacy and superpurity, which, its high pretensions notwithstanding, is but the offspring and evidence of a depraved nature and an impure imagination. There

is startling truth in the maxim, and also in its converse, "To the pure all things are pure." It is a forcible rebuke of that affectation of which I speak, and which demonstrates the hypocrisy of its pretended modesty by its too ready suspicion of fancied detection of indelicacy where a really pure mind would see none. Indeed these supersensitive women overact their part, and thus lay themselves open to suspicion. "Innocence in woman needs not the aid of ostentation; like integrity in man, it rests securely upon its own consciousness."

A certain degree of reserve will now become you. An old divine says, "A discreet reserve, like the distance kept by royal personages, contributes to maintain the proper deference." Women can make their society too cheap, and I would not have you fall into that error. Most of our pleasures are prized in proportion

to the difficulty we experience in obtaining them. Never in society, or even in the most familiar conversation with friends, so far forget yourself as to depart from that nice decorum of speech, manners, and appearance which is expected from your sex, especially at your age. Sedate manners and a cheerful temper should mark all your social intercourse. "Reverence thyself," although a heathen maxim, is a safe rule, and especially so for a woman. She who does not reverence herself, must not expect others to show her deference. Maintain a becoming dignity and reserve, and your company will be sought after by the discreet and virtuous, which is the highest compliment that can be paid to your sex.

I do not mean that you are to be girlishly bashful and shy, or that you are to be proud and distant in your social in-

tercourse. I do not object to sprightliness and freedom when governed by good sense and chastened by true refinement and delicacy. Dulness and insipidity, moroseness and rigor, are dead weights upon pleasant intercourse. I would have you so deport yourself with all gentleness and suavity as to win that respectful deference which it is the prerogative of your sex to receive, and the delight of ours worthily to pay. Avoid therefore the frivolities of speech and manners which are too common with your sex at the present day. Levity of deportment, however much it may please for a time, never wins cordial and permanent esteem. I would a thousand times rather see a young woman carry bashfulness too far, than that she should pique herself on the freedom of her manners. Unfeminine boldness is, I think, one of the most marked faults of the present gener-

ation. It has done much to destroy respect for virtue, and to weaken that influence for good which women ought always to exert, and were wont to possess. Men, it is true, are often dazzled for a while by youthful vivacity; but they nevertheless have their hours of sober thought, when they look upon women with a clearer eye and a closer inspection than you perhaps suppose. At any rate, the majesty of your sex invariably suffers by too great familiarity. "So long as women govern themselves," says one, "by the exact rules of prudence and modesty, their lustre is like that of the meridian sun in its clearness, which, though less approachable, is considered more glorious; but when they decline from this, they are like that sun in a cloud, which, though more safely gazed upon, is not half so bright."

Remember also, my dear ——, that to

God you are responsible for the preservation, in all its power, of that wonderful influence over our sex with which he has endowed you. This marvellous attribute of womanhood, and the responsibilities it involves, cannot be overestimated. I fear these responsibilities are seldom sufficiently appreciated. No doubt the influence of the sexes is reciprocal, but yours, it can hardly be questioned, is immensely the greater. Your power in this respect is all but unlimited. "How often," observes a writer on this subject, "have I seen a company of men who were disposed to be riotous, checked quickly into decency by the accidental entrance of an amiable woman." It is by the influence of your sex, and more especially when virtue and piety have enhanced your power, that men's hearts are moulded, that they acquire habits of courtesy and urbanity, and that they



conceive a disrelish for coarse jests, indelicate language, and violent temper. Where you awaken honorable love, your sway is almost absolute, for then you can guide the wayward, calm the restless, and reclaim the erring.

I would have you set before yourself the best standards of feminine excellence. Emulate their example. Cultivate every noble quality of your sex. Take no part in idle gossip, in profitless discourse about dress and fashion, but let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ. Seek the society of women of cheerful piety, good sense, and useful lives. Add every accomplishment to those you already possess. Keep alive your taste for domestic occupations. It will hereafter be worth more to you than great riches. A practical knowledge of domestic affairs and their management, is both honorable and profitable to any woman,

I care not how great her wealth or how high her social position.

There is but one other subject that I need just now counsel you upon. There is a saying that "princes and young women seldom hear the truth." Flattery you have often heard, possibly sometimes not unwillingly. From henceforth discountenance and frown it down. Little of the adulation to which young women are treated is worth a moment's regard. The blunt candor of incivility is really more entitled to respect and consideration. The habitual flatterer is never to be trusted. In your absence he would probably not open his lips to defend you if maligned, or in your distress have a sympathy to offer you. You cannot of course always take umbrage at a graceful or well-turned compliment; but you can in a thousand ways manifest your dislike of mere flattery, and by so

doing you will raise yourself in the esteem of the wise and good. Let me add, what God's word and human experience both teach, "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

Your affectionate father.



## VII.

## PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

MY DEAR — — :

THERE is probably little difference of opinion between us on the subject of public places of amusement. Your own good sense will be in league with the potent influence of early education to save you from this snare of the evil one. You know that the theatre is no fitting place for a young person of your sex, keenly sensitive to the least violation of that delicacy which should be the rule of her life, and her chief ornament and glory. Twice or thrice, as you know, have I been an unwilling spectator at a theatrical representation, such as frequenters of the theatre deemed moral and unexceptionable. For myself I marvelled much

that husbands could take their wives, fathers their daughters, and brothers their sisters, to see and hear what was done and said by the actors; and still more, that any woman of modesty and refinement could ever pay a second visit to a theatre. Although great elocutional excellence is sometimes displayed on the stage, and although dramatists have undeniably furnished some of the noblest creations of our literature, you will be a gainer in every way by adhering to your resolution never to enter a theatre. You can study the characters the dramatist depicts, the sentiments of his plays, and the philosophy he inculcates, far better in the privacy of your own room than in the highest style of stage representation. The acting appeals to the eye and ear, but not to the intellect, and is accompanied by such associations, and is made the vehicle for so much that is profane

and indelicate, that the theatre can never be a healthful place of resort, for the young especially.

I am free to admit, however, that this is not an argument against the *principle* of theatrical representations; and I think that our public teachers and moralists have erred in not making a distinction between principle and practice in this matter. There is no immorality or sin *per se* in dramatizing an epoch in history or an event in national or domestic life, in putting sentiment or narrative into the mouths of historical personages, if the language is pure, the sentiment just, and the narrative of good tendency. The dramatic form of teaching and the personation of character have very high sanction. There are "sacred" dramas as well as profane; personations and representations which good men approve, as well as those which they abhor. The

modern Sunday-school exhibitions—the display of the children upon the stage, their dialogues, their assumption of characters both in costume and language—are in *principle* the same as theatrical representations; their moral tone, their purpose, and their accompaniments only being different from those of the theatre. The charades, which are the source of so much amusement and intellectual exercise in the domestic circle, are of the same nature.

But all this conceded, there remains the fact that the play-house is to be avoided as you would shun the home of the pestilence or the plague. You cannot frequent it without taint. Every man acquainted with the business management of these places, knows that no theatre could be profitably conducted where a high standard of delicacy and morality was adhered to; where no pro-

fane expression ever fell from the actor's lips, where nothing bordering upon immodesty was uttered, and where all the associations of the place were pure and virtuous. No one can ask stronger evidence that the theatre throws its influence against morality, virtue, and religion. It is indeed an institution designed for the ungodly, and therefore panders to their tastes.

I am inclined to place dancing in almost the same category as play-going. Even though it be pleaded that, under certain limitations and regulations, it is a healthful exercise, it must also be admitted that an hour's brisk walking in the open air is worth immeasurably more as a promoter of health than a whole day's indoor dancing. In sober truth, health has few more powerful and insidious foes than dancing, with its artificially heated rooms, its exhausted and per-



noxious atmosphere, and its undue excitement of the whole nervous system.

There are also insuperable objections to promiscuous dancing, on the score of morality and delicacy, even apart from religious considerations. Promiscuous and habitual dancing involves a freedom between the sexes which can scarcely fail to weaken their mutual respect, and to destroy that high-toned deference which it is best that our sex should ever entertain towards yours. When you form one of a "set," you virtually surrender your own sense of what is right and decorous; in other words, you must substitute the usages of the dance for the dictates of your own judgment. You must in your turn take as a partner any one whom the others have accepted, or be rude to him and them. You may thus be thrown into associations that may be annoying or even hurtful to you.

Other evils follow when dancing once becomes a habit. It is a terrible consumer of time, and of time too that generally should be given to rest and sleep. You cannot leave your associates until dancing has ceased, even if the excitement of the hour did not disincline you so to do. I need not say that late hours are the rule with dancing parties. To dance too is almost unavoidably to waltz, which includes a freedom that no lady should permit in a stranger or mere acquaintance. In a word, dancing becomes a dissipation, an injury to health, and a sacrifice of feminine propriety and delicacy. It is therefore an amusement concerning which you may well earnestly pray, "Lead me not into temptation."

With your taste and talent for music, I do not think you are required to abstain from the pleasure it affords; but you must hold even this subordinate to

the higher claims of your religious profession, which binds you to the practice of self-denial in every thing your indulgence in which might be perverted into a bad example. You will, however, find some musical entertainments which you can enjoy without giving reasonable ground of offence to any. You may not *waste* time on any of these things. Do not misunderstand me. I am far from thinking that all the time is wasted that is spent in recreation. There is a time for laughter as well as for sadness. The wise man says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." A proper, that is to say, a moderate use of any thing which God has given us capacity to enjoy healthfully, cannot be an offence in his sight. The eye and the ear have a common right with the other senses to a share in lawful gratification.

Connected with this question of amuse-

ments and visiting, is another of no slight moment. Of course you cannot attend and return from such places without companions, and as a general thing the escort of a gentleman. You have acted most commendably in denying yourself visits, in themselves desirable, rather than accept a gentleman's escort that did not include some other lady as well as yourself. Until you have sufficient cause to regard some one of the opposite sex as especially your friend, you will do well to adhere to this rule. It will save you from many annoyances and unpleasant criticisms, and greatly raise you in the estimation of the worthy of my sex.

Add to it another wholesome rule of conduct: Be chary of accepting from single gentlemen favors that cost money. I do not mean that if any young gentleman of good means, with whose family you have a friendly and intimate acquaintance, in-

vites you to attend a lecture, or any other proper place of resort, in company with himself and his sisters, or other members of his family, and politely sends you a ticket or offers you a seat in the carriage with them, you are to decline the invitation, or stipulate that you shall bear your share of the expenditures. You could not do that with politeness, unless such attention had become marked or burdensome, in which case your good sense would prompt you to decline further invitations until the motive of them was frankly explained. But when the gentleman of a party is a stranger or a mere acquaintance, insist modestly but firmly on paying your own expenses. The usages of good society neither give him a right to impose, nor require you to accept, pecuniary obligations, and I know that you will be respected all the more for declining to incur them.

One custom prevails in at least one large city, and possibly in others, against which it cannot be necessary to warn *you*. I have known young ladies who, being invited to a party, with a request that each would bring a gentleman—an impropriety that cannot be too strongly condemned—or having a fancy to attend some place of amusement, will summon male acquaintances as attendants, and expect them to provide carriages and tickets of admission, if a place of amusement is the destination. Of course the lady is placed under obligation to the gentleman from the moment she enters the carriage provided at his expense. They are alone, and they return alone, at midnight or early morn, from the heated concert-room, or excited by the dance, if not by the sparkling wine-cup. He is conscious of his advantage as well as she of her obligation, and is perhaps

already meditating its repetition. Is this a position in which a young lady, self-respecting, delicate, and modest, should voluntarily place herself? But I fear no such impropriety on your part, feeling well assured that you would deem any pleasure far too dearly purchased at such a sacrifice of self-respect.

Your affectionate father.



## VIII.

## DRESS.

MY DEAR — :

I FEAR I am not so competent as you suppose to advise you on the not unimportant subject of dress. There is one at my elbow, however, upon whose judgment and taste in all such matters you have learned to rely, and it will entitle the suggestions in this letter to all the more respect when I tell you that to a great extent I am only her amanuensis.

But let me first lay down certain axioms, the truth of which I think cannot be controverted. I will concede that in portions of holy writ costly attire and ornaments are spoken of without censure, and even with commendation. "The Spirit of God filled Bezaleel, Aholiab,"



and others, "with wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, to devise and work all manner of curious and cunning works of the carver of wood, the cutter of stones, the jeweller, the engraver, the embroiderer in blue and purple, in scarlet and fine linen." The psalmist mentions with approbation the "clothing of wrought gold" and "raiment of needlework" of the king's daughter; and in the book of Proverbs, the virtuous woman is commended for "clothing her household with scarlet, and herself with silk and purple." So that there are circumstances, even allowing something for the poetic and figurative character of these passages, in which costly attire may be made and worn without sin.

I make this remark that you may see that I am no ascetic in this matter. But an excessive love of dress is an evil nevertheless. It is condemned in the Bible,

and is sinful in the sight of God. It is also an indubitable evidence of a weak and trivial mind. No young person who is a victim of this passion is likely to take pleasure in intellectual or religious improvement. She who is constantly looking into her mirror will have little inclination to look into her character. She who seeks to captivate by dress will have little solicitude about the possession of higher qualifications. This miserable idol of dress too often swallows up all that is solid and rational and praiseworthy. It consumes the precious hours that were given for the noblest and most valuable purposes. It perverts the capacities of nature, the acquirements of education, and the bounties of Providence, to the low desire of being admired for embellishments that imply no merit in the wearer, and can confer no honor in the eyes of any but the thoughtless

and vain. And who can describe the profusion of expenditure it involves, and the painful and pitiful shifts that are often necessary to support it; the encroachments on health, the anxieties of mind, and the mortification of being disappointed of conquest or fame; the ridiculous and the well-deserved distress to which the votaries of dress are sometimes exposed? Well might St. Paul write, "I will . . . that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." And yet who has not seen, even in professedly religious families, such extravagance in dress as evinced faith in it as a means of securing admiration?

I could name some baneful fruits of this passion for dress, but they would be

out of place in a letter to you. Let me say, however, that these meretricious displays have little or no influence, whatever may be the popular opinion to the contrary, with the really worthy of my sex, and that many a young man, whose companionship would have been a joy for life, has been repelled by them. It cannot be otherwise. He who would make his way honorably through the world, knows that economy, personal and domestic, is as essential to success as industry; and he will not impede his progress, and peril his reputation and his domestic peace, by taking into life-partnership one whose first and almost only care is the costly decoration of her own person. Men are not in this matter the unreflecting beings too many of your sex seem to suppose. Instances not a few have I known wherein young men have voluntarily and resolutely crushed

out a rising attachment, because the object of it, on a more intimate acquaintance, has proved to be a worshipper at this shrine. But I have written more than I intended on this phase of the subject. Let me now give you a few practical suggestions that may possibly be of service to you.

Thorough neatness in dress is of far more importance than mere fashion or costliness. Indeed nothing will atone for slovenliness or untidiness. It is no exaggeration to say that any young woman, however plain her features, attired in a thoroughly neat morning dress, will make a hundred-fold more agreeable impression than the veriest Venus in costly but tawdry or slovenly robes. The one inspires confidence, the other awakens distrust. The one speaks of an innate self-respect as well as of a laudable desire to please; the other tells only of vanity and

insincerity. The true lady is uniformly, and from instinct, neat in her apparel; as scrupulously so before her household, or her domestics only, as when in society; at early morn, when engaged exclusively in household employments, as in the evening, when entertaining friends. The material and the style of her dress may be changed, but the principle and taste that regulate it are always and uniformly operative.

Avoid all incongruities of dress. Wear always that which best befits the employment in which you are engaged. To observe this rule with fidelity is to give good proof that you are provident and thoughtful in those many minor matters which make up the character of the woman whose price is "above rubies;" of her whose rule of life is, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Nothing is more vulgar, more derogatory to the

female character, than a departure from this rule.

. Dress always in harmony with your pecuniary ability and social station; and it is, I scarcely need say, immeasurably wiser to place the standard too low, in the former regard, than too high. But it would no more be proper for you to dress like a domestic servant, or a day-laborer's wife, than it would be for you to rival the wife or daughter of a millionaire. Your station in life and your liberal education have given you a taste and refinement that not only legitimately may, but really should, have an influence on your mode of attire. You can dress genteelly, though you dress ever so plainly and economically. Gentility and economy in this matter are not incompatible. They are often closely allied.

Above all things, bear in mind that you have made a public profession of the

religion of Christ, and in dress, as in every thing else, you are to be governed by Christian principles. You are not to conform to the fashions and customs of the worldly-minded. You cannot consistently, or with peace to your conscience or safety to your soul, be the slave of dress and the devotee of fashion. Christ and his church have claims upon your thoughts and energies and means. You cannot live to yourself. You are a disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus, and must justify your profession.

I cannot perhaps better conclude these counsels than by quoting from an old author the following paraphrase of 1 Tim. 2:8-10: "I would exhort, and even enjoin Christian women always to dress with decency and moderation; never to go beyond their circumstances or to aspire beyond their station, so as to preclude or hinder works of mercy; not to



value themselves on dress, or to despise those more meanly habited; in short, never to spend too much time or thought on the embellishment of the body, but always to prefer the graces of the mind, modesty, meekness, prudence, piety, with all virtuous and charitable occupations, all beautiful and useful accomplishments suited to their rank and condition. These are the chief ornaments of the sex. These will render them truly lovely as women, and as Christians will more peculiarly become them."

Your affectionate father.

## IX.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH MR. —.

MY DEAR — :

YOUR excessive care to make your mention of Mr. — appear incidental only, while it provoked a smile, warned me that your parents must not expect always to have your undivided love. It suggested to me too the duty of promptly performing a duty that from its delicate nature I would fain have yet longer postponed, but which involves a subject too vitally affecting your future happiness and welfare to be omitted from a father's confidential correspondence with his daughter.

To say that it will cost us no pang to feel that we have a rival in your affections, would be to profess a stoicism we

do not feel. On the other hand, to complain of aught that promotes our child's happiness would indicate a selfishness of which, I trust, we are incapable. All that we ask of you is, that in such an important matter as an engagement, you will make no decision without the most sober reflection, devout and earnest prayer for providential guidance, and frank communication and consultation with us. You will not find that either of us has grown sceptical in affairs of the heart, while we can give you the benefit of some knowledge of men gained by experience and observation. I am sure I need not say that the tenderest regard for your happiness will prompt whatever counsels we may give you. The question of parental authority and filial duty in such matters need not be raised between us. I do not believe that you would countenance the attentions of any

one against whom we could raise reasonable objections, and I am sure we should not force upon you an engagement at variance with your inclinations.

You have too much good sense to take it for granted, as too many young women do, that a pleasant acquaintance and friendly intercourse with one of the other sex must necessarily lead to courtship and marriage. The mixing up of love with the ordinary civilities of life has wrought serious injury to young people of both sexes, for it has in a great degree closed the avenues to that free intercommunication and fuller knowledge of each other so important to a wise choice of a companion for life. But its disadvantages are greater to your sex than to ours. It is certainly as important to a woman that she marry happily as it is to a man, and she should have equal opportunities of judging of mental,

social, moral, and religious qualifications, and all the more that the privilege of choice is denied to her. But a knowledge of men can only be obtained by association with them.

In one particular, however, you have an advantage which, discreetly used, may increase your opportunities of estimating character rightly. No matter how marked a gentleman's attentions to you may be, until he makes a formal declaration of love, you have a right to consider them only as the ordinary courtesies of society, and you *should* so consider them.

In the case of Mr. ———, your sex's quick perception in such matters has probably shown you the true state of his feelings. You can therefore properly set about the careful study of his qualities, and inform yourself of his character. Let me impress upon you that no true-heart-

ed woman will abuse the power that this advantage gives you. When she detects the rising attachment, she will examine closely her own heart, and if satisfied that she cannot reciprocate the sentiment, will endeavor by her carriage towards the gentleman to save him the pain and mortification of a useless avowal of his suit. She is not worthy the name of woman who would lure a man to the avowal of a love which she is conscious she could not return. But on such points your own goodness of heart, and the tact natural to your sex, will be better guides than any counsel of mine.

Supposing my conjecture about Mr. ——— to be correct, I assume the matter to be just this : You suspect that sooner or later he will make you an offer of his hand, but the ground of your suspicion is yet so indefinite that you do not like to acknowledge it even to me. I will

take the hint, however, and act upon it. My first counsel to you is, that you deliberately canvass his merits before your affections become entangled and your judgment is warped by the compliment of a proposal. Do not be afraid of thoroughly analyzing all the elements of his character. Ask some friend in whom you have confidence to institute inquiries respecting his sentiments, habits, pursuits, temper, etc. Put your feelings and prospects aside, and form your judgment and course of action on the merits alone. You had better never marry than marry unhappily. Keep this in memory, for it is true. And it is also true that the less solicitude you encourage in that direction, the more likely is your path to be favorably opened before you.

I know but little of Mr. —, and shall seek to know more. But dismissing him or any other individual gentle-

man from our thoughts, let me ask of you, my dear daughter, to ponder well the step you may soon be urged to take. When a gentleman proposes marriage to you, he asks you to live with him until death parts you. You have therefore to do mainly not with his public character, not with the reputation he has in the world, but with what he shows himself to be in the privacy of home. It is there, and not in society, that you have to live with him. Need I tell you that no amount of outward show, or of polite attention to yourself in public, would compensate for the absence of innate worth, for the lack of integrity, and of that loving tenderness that finds its choicest field in the privacy of the domestic hearth? In my judgment the question so commonly asked, "*What has he?*" is of immeasurably less importance than the one, "*What is he?*" Wealth cannot make the fireside happy



in the absence of love and virtue. But these can make home an Eden where there are no riches. Money does augment, but it cannot create happiness, and especially the happiness of wedded life. That rests upon another basis altogether. He spoke by inspiration who said, "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

The man to whom you could happily unite yourself in marriage must have such strong sense as to command your respect. In the element of mental strength he should at least be your equal; it were better that he should be your superior. God's order is that the wife shall have the stronger sense of the husband to lean upon for counsel and guidance, as she has his stronger arm to trust

in for protection and defence. He should also have strong moral principles, so as to command your confidence. It is he who has to mingle with the world, to defy its allurements, to grapple with its trials, and to triumph over its temptations. You can readily conceive how your happiness as his wife would be marred could you not send him forth every morning assured that whatever misfortune might befall him, he would return to you at eventide with a spotless honor and an untarnished reputation.

He should possess too a refined and elevated taste. The man so endowed is a gentleman at all times, and his presence will make home a place of true enjoyment. He should have naturally a good temper. I will not go so far as to say that "temper is every thing," but next to personal religion it is the best guarantee for wedded happiness. Some have even placed it

first among the desirable qualities in a husband. This I cannot do. I could not advise you to marry even a religious man whose temper was naturally bad; but neither could I counsel you to link your life with one who, possessing all the natural qualities I have named, yet lacked that fear of the Lord which is the instruction of wisdom.

You will notice, my dear —, that I have said little or nothing about the worldly circumstances of the man who may seek you in marriage. In truth I think that an entirely minor matter. Let him be a man of good sense, of sound principles and industrious habits, of correct and pure tastes, and blessed with a kind disposition and a renewed heart, and I could unhesitatingly intrust you to his care and protection. Encouraged by your sympathy and coöperation, such a man would “provide things honest in the

sight of all men," and would command a respect which riches alone could not secure for him. Your happiness would be safer in his keeping than in that of the wealthiest of mortals lacking such qualities. In this, as in all other matters, "lean not to thine own understanding; but in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths." So counsels

Your affectionate father.



## X.

## COURTSHIP.

MY DEAR — :

YOUR letter did not surprise me, but it delighted me by its tone of implicit confidence in your parents, and the combined delicacy and good sense with which you state your views and feelings. Much as I love you, nay, because of my deep affection for you, I hesitate how to counsel you, and almost shrink from the task now that it confronts me, for I remember that the present and the future, the temporal and probably the eternal welfare of my beloved child may hang upon the teachings of my pen.

I deeply regret that it was necessary so long to delay a full and explicit answer, for I can appreciate your anxiety

and the perplexities of your position pending my reply. You have borne the suspense in a truly noble and Christlike spirit, and my regret has been relieved by the consciousness that you would rightly divine the reason of my protracted silence, and not attribute it to any lack of interest in the subject on which you wrote. I am heartily glad now to be able to put an end to your suspense.

I have no objection to a closer intimacy with Mr. ——. From all that I have learned respecting him—and I have instituted inquiries, as was my duty, in other quarters as well as in those to which he so frankly referred me—I not only can interpose no objection, but am heartily glad that one so worthy has aspired to your love. The elements of his character are good, and he has established a reputation for honesty, industry,

manly piety, and a happy temper, that few at his years have attained to. To the further development of these excellent traits you may largely contribute, from the day that you acknowledge to him a reciprocity of affection. I like especially the candor with which he has explained to me his circumstances, prospects, and views, and the frankness with which he has told you what are the limits of his expectations. In this he has not only shown a manly honesty, but has paid a compliment to your good sense which to you must be pleasing, and to me is highly gratifying. Let it be yours, my dear —, to reciprocate the spirit of honorable candor in which he has approached you. A man who deals thus frankly with the woman of his choice, is a hundred-fold more entitled to her heart's trust than he who seeks to entangle her into an engagement by exagger-

ating his ability to support her, and concealing the sterner realities of the future from her. The honorable and sincere lover will not act upon the principle,

“What would offend the eye in a good picture,  
The painter casts discreetly into shade.”

It is infinitely better that at the outset each should know the worst regarding the future, so that it may bring no disappointment.

Having thus disabused your mind of any fears that my cordial sanction would be withheld from your further acquaintance with Mr. ——, let me give you such counsels at this crisis in your life, for such it is, as parental affection suggests and observation tells me will be of service to you.

Make no positive engagement for the present. Much reason as I have to admire and repose confidence in your friend, I cannot be blind to the fact that your



acquaintance with each other has been brief and comparatively slight. Each may be very amiable and estimable, and yet each may be an unfit life-companion for the other. If such a disqualification exists, a more intimate acquaintance may reveal it, and it had better be discovered before than after a formal engagement has been entered into. There will be less hesitation about acting on such discovery if the way of retreat has not been barred by such engagement.

Some gentlemen, who have the most honorable intentions, have mistaken views of what true honor is; and if their troth has been fully plighted, will be apt, in such a contingency, to reason thus: "I am disappointed in some important elements of her character, and perceive that there is not that unity of sentiment between us that I supposed and hoped. But our mutual engagement is avowed.

I cannot honorably recede, and must make the best of it." You will readily understand that to make the *best* of such a state of things is impossible, and that such happiness as married life ought to yield would elude the pursuit of any two persons thus circumstanced. If an engagement had not been formally entered into, there would have been little temptation to press matters to a marriage that either was conscious or even apprehensive would be without unity. Let it be understood between you that for at least three months, while you associate more frequently and with somewhat less reserve than you have hitherto done, nothing more serious than friendly acquaintance shall necessarily result, and that at the end of that time either may, without offence to the other, decline an affianced relation. I cannot help thinking that were such a course more generally pur-

sued by young people, many an unhappy marriage would be avoided.

At the same time I judge it more than probable that your future life is to be blended with that of Mr. ——. Even were you not both as young as you are, I would advise you to be in no hurry to exchange irrevocable vows at the hymeneal altar. In my judgment the instances are rare in which courtship can be wisely dispensed with. When *strangers* marry, the chances for happiness are slight indeed. A great deal has been said about the pleasurable emotions incident to courtship, and far too little respecting its uses. It is a discipline, a schooling for married life, moulding the hearts of both into that mystic union which in marriage is the “bond of perfectness,” fostering and sanctioning tender confidences, revealing and modifying the minuter traits of character, so that one-

ness of soul shall grow and mature, and the neck of each be prepared for the yoke that they must for a lifetime bear together.

With respect to your behavior towards Mr. ——— when you are formally betrothed to each other, it is not possible for me to give you more than general counsels. Your first care must be to acquaint yourself thoroughly with the less conspicuous elements of his character, and especially with the measure of his sensibility, which latter must largely regulate your deportment towards him. From the tone of his letter to me, and from what is said by those who know him well, I judge him to be of a confiding, sympathetic, generous nature, and therefore as sensitive as a healthy mind can be. Your relation to him will make it your duty cordially to reciprocate his confidence, and to avoid every thing that

might tend to chill the warmth of his affection. If unhappily any misunderstanding ever arises between you, do not let a false pride prevent you from promptly aiding in removing it. If he is worthy of your love, he is worthy also of your fullest candor and tenderest trust. Be as ready to give as to ask explanations that may be needful or even desirable.

As you value your mutual happiness, *avoid lovers' quarrels*. Some profess to make light of these. I entreat *you* not to fall into that error. True love, though strong and enduring if wisely and generously cultivated, is nevertheless a plant of rare delicacy and sensitiveness, that can be killed by repeated changes of temperature, by a series of sudden chills, as surely as though uprooted by a sudden tornado. Be as ready to yield as to exact those small concessions which

prevent disputation and promote mutual kindness and affability. Do not yourself be quick to take umbrage. You cannot suppose that Mr. —— would intentionally grieve or offend you. The moment you can suppose *that* of him, true confidence has ceased, and you and he had better thenceforward walk in separate paths. But this is not likely to be the case, and it involves no sacrifice of womanly dignity or independence on your part to assume the absence of all intention to annoy or displease you, and to be first, if need be, to brush away every obstacle to the most perfect mutual good understanding. Especially from the hour of your betrothal avoid any thing like flirtation or undue familiarity with other gentlemen. I cannot conceive how an honorable and truthful suitor can be more keenly and deeply wounded than by such forgetfulness or non-appreciation on the

part of his betrothed of the relationship she sustains towards him. But I need not say more on this point to you.

Nor indeed need I counsel you much further on the subject of this letter. When you have given Mr. —— your promise to become his wife, it will be alike your duty and your pleasure to cultivate esteem and love for him in your heart, and to familiarize yourself with the thought that your future destiny is to be inseparably linked with his “in weal or woe, in gloom or glee.” In your intercourse with him you will regard him as your future husband, nor conceal wholly from him the love you bear him. In all this, however, you must be careful to maintain a just maidenly reserve and a true feminine delicacy, which will heighten his esteem and affection. Nor may you forget that even the pleasurable months of courtship are to be sanc-

tified by prayer and watchfulness, and improved by religious conversation. You are to be helpers of each other in all righteousness as well now as hereafter, and to act ever on the principle that no intercourse is so profitable and so sweet as that which is seasoned by the fear of God and the blessed consciousness of his approval. And this may you ever enjoy.

Your affectionate father.





## XI.

## WIFEHOOD.

MY DEAR — :

I have somewhat delayed this letter in order that its counsels may be fresh in your remembrance when you enter upon your new and inexpressibly important relation of WIFE. I need not say that your approaching marriage occupies much of my thoughts and occasions me no little solicitude. I know well that he to whose care I shall surrender you is in every way worthy of the trust, and that both love and duty will prompt him to fulfil the solemn vows that in marriage he will take upon himself. Yet it is no slight or easy thing to step down permanently into the second place in your affections and allegiance, and to transfer

to another's keeping the present and future welfare of a cherished and beloved child. But I bow to what I believe to be in the order of God's providence and for your happiness; and although it costs me a pang, I will say to you that, next to your God, your first allegiance and the first place in your affections will be due to your husband. You may not cease to "honor your father and your mother," for the divine Lawgiver has made that duty of perpetual obligation; but your duty as a daughter will be subordinate to your duty as a wife, for this also is divinely ordained, and I should be doing a wrong to your husband and an injury to yourself were I to teach you any other doctrine. You may therefore start in married life with the knowledge that your parents, while not loving you a whit less tenderly than heretofore, fully recognize and concur in

your changed relation towards them, and desire, for the sake of your happiness, that your first care shall be to please him to whom, "for better, for worse," you are to be joined until death severs the bond of your union.

You have too much good sense to expect unmingled bliss even in your marriage with Mr. —, and I am unwilling to cast a shade over the future by any prolonged moralizing upon the uncertainty of human felicity. Indeed I believe that you will realize more than the usual share of happiness in your new relation and sphere. I see no reason why you should not. Some trials of your mutual affection, some occasions on which there must be reciprocal forbearance, if you would preserve the even flow of the stream of your wedded bliss, you must expect. Whenever such occasion arises, let it be your first care, so

far as in you lies, to have the disturbing cause totally removed. I advised this as the wisest and best course during the days of your engagement. It will now become both your duty and your interest. No concession can be too great, no submission too complete, that dispels the shadow that falls upon your married life and thrusts itself between your husband and yourself.

Especially do I urge upon you to *begin aright* in your new sphere of duty. A good beginning rarely fails to make a good ending. From the hour that you become a wife, step into the full dignity and responsibility of wifehood. Henceforth you will have done with all the lighter habits and tastes of the unmarried woman, for you will have become your husband's helpmate in the serious work of life. It is well for you that your excellent mother's teaching and example

have taught you familiarity with domestic affairs, for undeniably your husband's comfort and happiness, and yours by inseparable consequence, will depend largely upon your disposition and ability wisely to rule and direct your household concerns. Your house will be a *home*, an Eden, in proportion as you infuse order and harmony throughout its various departments; and thus will you secure the confidence of your husband and the respect of all.

I need not here define your religious obligations to your household. On that subject you have had "line upon line, and precept upon precept." Your husband and yourself have well determined that from the day you enter your new domicile it shall be sanctified unto God. My counsels now have reference exclusively to your conjugal and domestic relations, and I want you to be well con-

vinced that it is of vital importance that you promptly make your authority and influence felt under your own roof. Establish at the beginning order and regularity in every department. This will save you many annoyances, and make household duty easy in the future. You are bound to do this as much for your dear husband's comfort, as from your own love of order. Therefore, with all your system, let there be no frost-work of needless preciseness cast over his home, for few things are more repulsive to a man of a generous nature and domestic affections and habits.

When your husband seeks his home, after toiling all day for *your* comfort, he has a right to expect that *his* comfort shall in turn be studied. While his love for you will make him careful not to weaken your authority or needlessly derange your plans, you must not seek to

bind him to the rigid observance of the "rules and regulations" of your house. Such rules are made to promote his comfort, and not to govern his actions. Home should ever be to him a place of relaxation and enjoyment, otherwise he will at least be under the temptation to seek them elsewhere. He will expect, and has a right to be *off duty* when he returns to his own house and fireside. It will be your province to see that he realizes these expectations by having his home always ready for his glad and welcome reception. This will be your equivalent for his industry and toil to provide you with all needful comforts.

Some one has truly said that "a husband owes his wife no duty that does not involve a duty from her," a truth that I would not have you forget. If you wish your husband to love his home beyond all other places, make it of all places the

most attractive to him; and it would be strange indeed if, with your vantage-ground as the woman of his heart's choice, you could not outstrip all rivals in this respect. Competitors for your husband's society there will be, but you will have the start of them, and can outbid them if you will. Your husband will love you as he loves none other. A smile from you, a kiss of welcome, a word of cheer, the little attentions that you lovingly pay, the pleasant and gracious reception of his friends—these and a thousand other things that your heart will suggest, will be infinitely more potent than all outside attractions. In sober truth, these will have little or no influence over him until you have, in some degree, first chilled and alienated him by the coldness or indifference of your reception of him, or have repelled him by domestic discomfort.



But not only, my dear ——, must you study to make home pleasant and attractive, but to make yourself in person and mind ever agreeable to your husband. I know of no more common mistake, of no error more fatal to the perpetuity of conjugal happiness, into which young wives fall, than that of becoming careless about dress and personal attractiveness generally, because “only their husbands” are expected to see them. They thus wrong their husbands, and themselves yet more. To no man should a wife desire to look so attractive and charming as to her husband. And every married woman would do well to bear in mind, that if “only her husband” sees her in her negligence and slovenliness, she is probably the only woman whom he sees thus unattractive, for no other lady will permit herself to be seen by him in like untidiness. As you would dress—that is, with equal care

and neatness—to sit down to your first breakfast-table as a wife, or to receive your husband on his first evening's return from business, so attire yourself at all future times. You will thus promote your self-respect, honor your husband, and retain his admiration, which ought to be your ambition, and will be an unfailing source of happiness.

And while preserving carefully the graces of your person, be at least equally careful to add to the graces of your mind. Your husband, by his intercourse with the world, his intercommunion with men and affairs, will inevitably almost, and without effort on his part, be constantly adding to his stores of general information. On the other hand, your domestic pursuits and comparative seclusion will be unfavorable to the acquisition of the same class of knowledge. But you will have time for reading and mental im-

provement. Improve your opportunities conscientiously. Retain all the knowledge you have acquired, and systematically add to your stores. Do not think because you are established in life, and have matter-of-fact household and wifely duties to perform, you may neglect mental improvement, and allow the field of your mind to run waste. You are to be your husband's *companion* in an intellectual sense as well as in others; and this you cannot be unless you keep pace with him in mental improvement, though you gather knowledge from different fields. Be prepared to reciprocate the pleasure you will derive from the information he may impart, by enriching him from your own stores of thought and sentiment. If you perseveringly aim at this, your husband will never have to seek intellectual companionship elsewhere, and thus you will place another golden chain upon his

affections. Perhaps I may judge too favorably of my sex, but I truly believe that no intelligent and affectionate wife, sincerely solicitous and *careful* to hold a legitimate sway over her husband, need have to complain that her hopes are unrealized.

Many other counsels occur to me, but I would not burden you with them at such a time. Much must be left, and I can cheerfully leave it to your own healthy perception of duty and the promptings of love. Briefly, "let love between you be without dissimulation." Be scrupulously honest with your husband in every thing. Have no confidences that he cannot share, no concealments from him whatever. Be ever kindly affectionate to him. Sometimes the cares, the perplexities, the undefinable unpleasantnesses of business, may send him home with clouded brow and possibly with ruffled temper.

Never let the cloud be reflected from your own face. With unostentatious affection wait until the sweet influences of love and home have had time to assert their gentle sway, and then your welcome sympathy will come in to soothe the chafed spirit and dispel the cloud. God bless you, my beloved child; and if, which I cannot doubt, you prove as loving and dutiful a wife as you have been a daughter, blessed will he be who takes you to his bosom and his home.

Your affectionate father.



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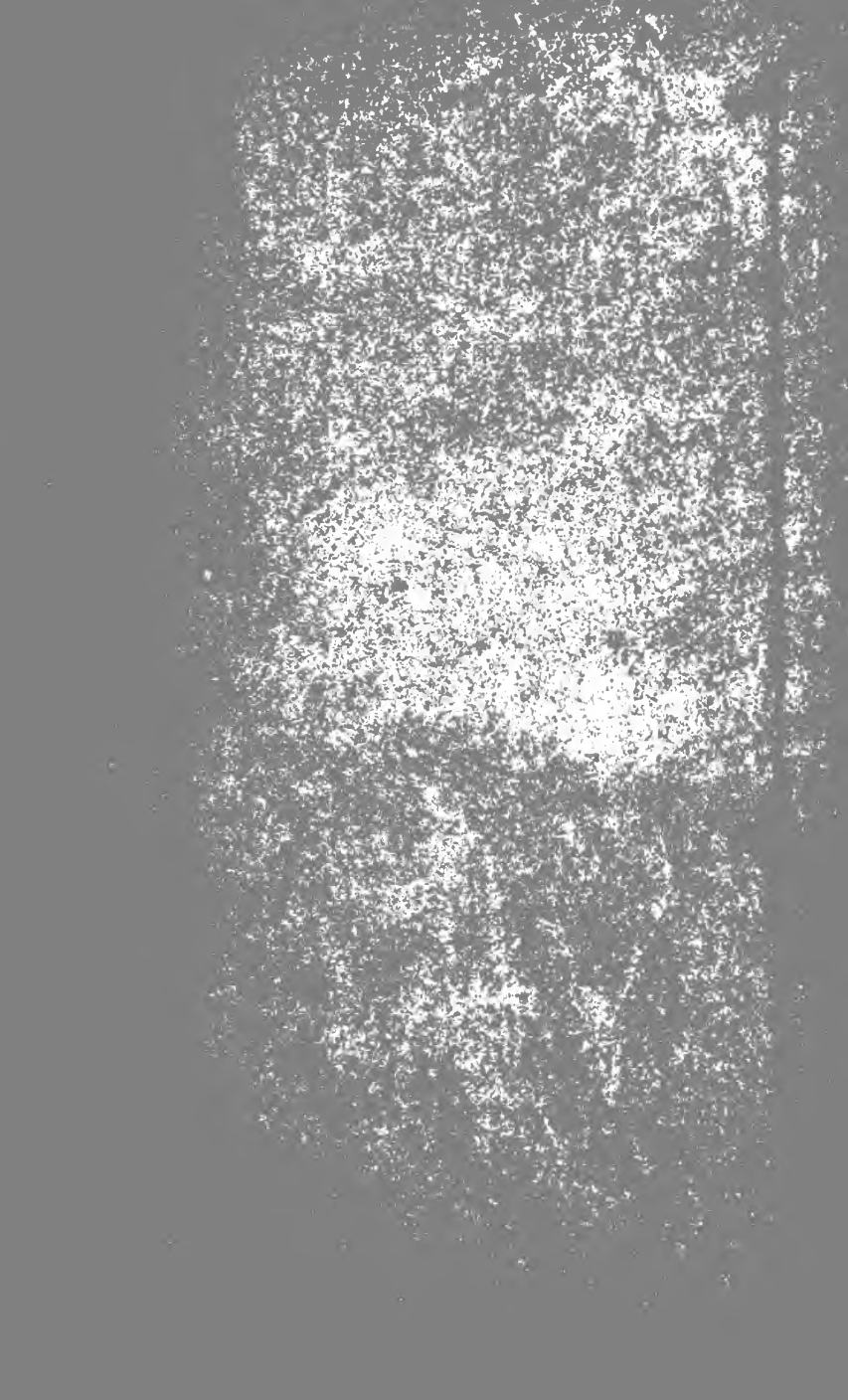


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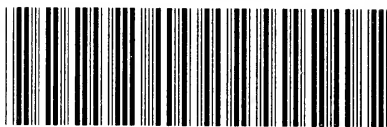
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